



September 2003

COUNCIL PASSES TRENCHING ORDINANCE TO PREVENT COMPANIES FROM DIGGING UP CITY STREETS

COUNCILMEMBER ATKINS HAD PUSHED FOR NEW POLICY SINCE MID 2001

In an effort to curb the wasteful practice of repeated trenching and unnecessary resurfacing of city streets by utility companies and contractors, the City Council passed a trenching moratorium September 9th that will prohibit any company from trenching a street within three years of the street's last reconstruction or resurfacing.

This is an issue I first took up as chair of the city's Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee. In May of 2001, KGTV Channel 10 challenged me to take a leadership position on this issue and try to develop a way to coordinate infrastructure projects in the city, especially as they related to street repair. This ordinance addresses a major part of this coordination effort.

We have all seen the ill effects caused by utility trenches in our newly repaired streets. Not only is this a complete waste of money, but it has been proven that this greatly undermines the life of the street.

The ordinance had been pending since December 2001, but was put on hold while the city concluded its Franchise Agreement negotiations.

Under the ordinance, a company that trenches a city street that is not scheduled for or in need of resurfacing would have to do one of three things: pay an excavation fee, resurface the street, or provide the city with a warranty for the work.

By implementing this ordinance, we will now be able to ensure that the integrity and life of our city streets are maintained and that precious city resources are not wasted because of a lack of coordination. The establishment of the

proposed moratorium allows us to better coordinate all of our capital improvement projects and maintenance work in the city right of way. By implementing these actions, we are ensuring that the quality of our streets is not compromised.

Specifically, the ordinance establishes a moratorium on trenching city streets within three years of a resurface job and one year of a slurry seal project. After the one-year moratorium for slurry sealed streets, utilities will be required to re-slurry streets from curb to curb in years two and three, instead of just patching the areas that have been trenched.



The new trenching ordinance will help keep unnecessary street resurfacing to a minimum, thereby reducing costs and inconvenience to residents.

The proposed ordinance provides flexibility to allow the necessary work to occur and will also hold those who do the work to an appropriate standard that protects the quality of our streets.

Additionally, under the ordinance all utilities and city departments will be required to correct or repair their work within 30 days. And in October of this year, all utilities doing work on city streets will be required to attend a full-day workshop on the best methods for restoring city streets.

In This Issue

New Trenching Ordinance Passed ...	1
Atkins, Chief Commit To Reactivate N'hood Watch ...	2
Innovative North Park Playground Opens ...	3
Pershing Portal Project Breaks Ground ...	3
Talmadge Community Cuts Ribbon On Traffic Circle ...	4
Regional Transportation Center Opens in City Heights ...	4

COUNCILMEMBER ATKINS, POLICE CHIEF LANSDOWNE PLEDGE SUPPORT TO HELP COMMUNITIES REACTIVATE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

At a joint news conference held Wednesday, September 3rd, at the North Park Community Service Center, our new Chief of Police, William Lansdowne, and I announced our desire to help district residents reactivate the hugely successful Neighborhood Watch programs which helped reduce crime in District Three by more than 50 percent in the mid to late 1990s. The news conference was prompted by a recent increase in the number of violent crimes over the past month, including three murders, one in North Park and two in Mid-City.

One of the toughest, least-pleasant aspects of being an elected official is hearing that one of your constituents has been murdered. Police Chief Lansdowne and I want to let the public know that we are aware of these crime and are deeply concerned when any violent crime occurs in our neighborhoods.



Councilmember Atkins was joined by (l to r) North Park Main Street Executive Director Jay Turner, Police Storefront volunteer Pat Laughlin, North Park Community Association member Vicki Granowitz and Police Chief William Lansdowne at a press conference to help reactivate Neighborhood Watch throughout the district to keep crime rates low.

For the better part of the last 10 years, we've seen crime, especially violent crime, greatly reduced throughout the city. In fact, San Diego is the safest large city in the United States. We've been vigilant in holding off what many perceive as an imminent increase in crime rates nationwide. So any time it appears that crime, particularly violent crime, is on the rise, it gets my attention, as well as the attention of the police department.

Chief Lansdowne and I have pledged to work with residents to reactivate Neighborhood Watch programs as one response to growing concerns around increased crime.

Throughout the '90s, Neighborhood Watch programs sprang up in neighborhoods across the city, and in record numbers in our district, with more than 200 active watches going strong at one point. Combined with Citizens Patrol, and as part of the police department's overall plan of neighborhood policing, crime dropped steadily throughout the decade. However, as crime rates dropped in the latter part of the 1990s, many of the Neighborhood Watch groups either disbanded or simply cut back on their activities. I believe it's time to re-energize and reactivate our Neighborhood Watch groups in an effort to help the police department keep our crime rates at the low levels we've come to enjoy over the past 10 years.

Neighborhood Watch is a community-based program which encourages residents to keep watch over their neighbors' homes in an effort to cut down on the number of crimes in their neighborhood. It originally started in the 1960s as a way to decrease and deter the number of burglaries occurring throughout the country.

I have asked my staff to begin working with neighborhood associations and organizations throughout the district to begin to identify where Neighborhood Watch groups previously existed, and take the appropriate steps to attempt to re-form and reactivate them.

Throughout the years, Neighborhood Watch has grown from an "extra eyes and ears" approach to crime prevention to a much more proactive, community-oriented endeavor. It was the adoption of community policing by local law enforcement agencies that most greatly contributed to the resurgence in Watch groups over the years. Neighborhood Watch fits nicely within the framework of law enforcement/community partnerships, and Neighborhood Watch meetings can be a useful forum to discuss neighborhood problems and practice problem-solving techniques.

I look forward to working with Chief Lansdowne, the local police officers, and community members to make Neighborhood Watch a vital component in our law enforcement strategy for the district.

To volunteer to start or be a member of a Neighborhood Watch program on your block, contact my office at 619/236-6633.

How To Contact Us

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STATE-OF-THE-ART PLAYGROUND OPENS AT NORTH PARK COMMUNITY PARK

I was pleased to join with community members on Saturday, September 6th, to officially open the new \$1.6 million North Park Tot Lot Project at North Park Community Park. The project is unique in that it integrates educational and public art features into the design of the playground and its equipment.

This playground is the culmination of years of design work, community input and countless meetings with city staff, and I couldn't be more pleased with the final product—the art and education features are outstanding. Providing increased park space and recreational opportunities for our Mid-City youth continues to be a top priority for me, so opening this playground was especially gratifying.

Conceived by ONA Inc. Landscape Architects and North Park's own Stone Paper Scissors, the North Park Tot Lot Project is believed to be the first playground in the city designed by artists who specialize in public art. The playground was built by Heffler Construction, Inc.



Dozens of local children joined with Councilmember Atkins (l), Park and Rec Director Ellie Oppenheim (c) and Stone Paper Scissors public artist Lynn Susholtz (r) to cut the ribbon opening the new playground in North Park.

The playground includes a large, climbable frog that makes and identifies 19 different sounds of various species of frogs, and offers a refreshing mist of water from its mouth. The frog theme is incorporated throughout

the park, which has a variety of activities, including a station where pulleys can be used to draw up sand to activate a sand-driven pinwheel, a map of the solar system imprinted on the sidewalk with constellations that children can easily identify, as well as a large sand area, and benches and play areas under many of the features. The frog doubles as a time capsule containing the wishes of neighborhood children.

North Park Community Park, which comes under the jurisdiction of the North Park Recreation Council, is located on Idaho Street between Lincoln and Howard avenues.

PERSHING PORTAL PROJECT BREAKS GROUND

Also on Saturday, September 6th, I and many who attended the North Park playground opening, joined with other community members a half-mile away to break ground on the Pershing Portal Project.



An artist's rendering of the Pershing Portal Project at 28th Street, Upas Street and Pershing Drive.

Located at the intersection of Pershing Drive, 28th Street and Upas Street, the project is a public art and pedestrian entryway into the greater North Park community and the five-block area known as the David O. Dryden Historic District, recognized by the 16 unique one-story Craftsmen bungalows and two-story houses build by contractor David Owen Dryden between 1911 and 1919.

This project represents the collective consciousness of an entire neighborhood, and brings together the past and present in a stunning design that will serve as a signature gateway into this historic community.

The entry plaza at 28th Street will permanently close the street to through traffic, and for the first time will provide a continuous curb line along Upas Street from west to east. The landscaped plaza will be at the same level as the existing sidewalk, and will include both stamped and color sidewalks and plaques commemorating David Dryden and his wife, Isabel Rockwood Dryden. Concrete towers 7.5 feet high with copper roofs will mark the entry, and a quote from the late, esteemed historian and longtime North Park resident Don Covington will be stamped into the pavement between the entry towers.

The project had its genesis in the late 1980s when North Park residents, including Phyliss and Tom Shess and Don and Karon Covington, sought to close off 28th Street to through traffic. After compiling traffic records and with the support of surrounding neighbors, the street was closed off in 1993. Shortly thereafter, the Pershing Portal Project was conceived, and funding for it has been pieced together over the past 10 years. Local residents will provide funding for temporary maintenance and irrigation of the project until it can be included in a permanent Maintenance Assessment District.

The project is expected to be completed by late 2003.

TALMADGE TRAFFIC CIRCLE OPENS!

I was pleased to join with County Supervisor Ron Roberts and residents of Talmadge on Saturday, August 16th, to cut the ribbon marking the completion of the first phase of the Talmadge traffic circle located at the intersection of Adams Avenue, 49th Street and Lorraine Avenue.



Councilmember Atkins and County Supervisor Ron Roberts join Talmadge residents in cutting the ribbon signifying completion of the first phase of the Talmadge traffic circle project.

The project was first conceived in the mid 1990s by neighborhood members seeking to improve traffic flow and safety at a confusing intersection.

A basic traffic circle was installed at the location in early 1999. However, shortly after its construction, residents voiced concerns with the aesthetics of the circle and decided to form a maintenance assessment district to pay for an upgraded circle complete with irrigated landscaping, a decorative wall, lighting elements and eventually a replica of one of the historic Talmadge gates that serve as gateways into the community.

NEW DISTRICT THREE GRAFFITI PROGRAM UP AND RUNNING

I'm pleased to announce that our newly formed District Three graffiti removal program is up and running. This promises to provide a greater level of service to the constituents of our district as we work together to remove graffiti from both residential and commercial properties and reduce blight in our neighborhoods.

This is a free service provided by Urban Corps through funding that was made possible by a partnership with my office and the Price Charities Foundation. Currently, this service is focusing on the City Heights area through November, but all District Three residents are encouraged to phone in graffiti to the Graffiti Hotline at 1-800-829-6884.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER BRINGS ALTERNATIVE FUEL AND VEHICLES TO MID-CITY

On Friday, August 8th, a wide range of elected officials, community members and transportation officials officially opened the Regional Transportation Center (RTC)—the most comprehensive alternative fuel center in California. In fact, it offers the widest range of alternative fuels west of the Mississippi River!

The center, operated by Pearson Ford of City Heights, is located at 41st Street and El Cajon Boulevard, directly above the I-15 freeway. The RTC is unique in that it includes non-profit educational resources along with for-profit commercial components, namely the sale of alternative fuels and vehicles at highly competitive prices.



The newly opened Regional Transportation Center at the intersection of 41st Street and El Cajon Boulevard, just above I-15.

In its heyday, El Cajon Boulevard was the premier showcase in San Diego for auto dealerships. So, in reality, we've come full circle with this project.

I'm pleased that the City's redevelopment agency partnered with Pearson Ford and the Ford Motor Company to make this project a reality, and I'm truly proud of the work of our redevelopment staff. Time and time again they have come through for us throughout the district.

The Agency was a major source of both funding and land for this project. They helped relocate the residents and businesses displaced by this construction, while also helping to expedite the permits. And the construction on this project was about as quick as any I've ever seen—it took less than six months to actually build this structure, so you have to be impressed with that!